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EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

Whether Our Prison System is Tending From the N. Y. Independent.

Any earnest thinker who has carefully looked over the "Report on Prisons and Reformatories in the United States and Canada," made to the Legislature of this State, in January last, by Drs. Wines and Dwight, and recently published in a volume of 150 pages, must have found abundant material for thought.

In a matter so vital as prison reform we do well to take note, from time to time, of our advance, and to inquire in what direction lies future progress. In the volume above mentioned, while there is much to encourage, there is more to call forth renewed exertion. More enlightened ideas, a better system than any yet to be found among us, are imperatively needed. We are in a transition state from the cruel, the repressive, the deterrent, to the humane, the hope-inspiring, the reformatory.

The Hindoo code says, "Punishment is the inspirer of terror; with a black aspect and red eye it terrifies the guilty." We are beginning to doubt whether the criminal is best reformed by the red eye and the black aspect. Six Northern States only still employ the lash as a reclaiming agency—Connecticut, Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, sometimes Vermont. Canada lags behind in this; her wardens still believe in the cat. They probably never heard a remark made by a convict to his chaplain, who was urging him to a better spirit: "Sir," said the man, "six years ago I was flogged in this prison; I have the marks of the lash still on my body; when these marks wear out I shall forget and forgive it." Punishments by the crucifix, bucking, shaving the head, the ball and chain, and other remnants of barbarism, still linger among us; but day by day they diminish, fall into disrepute, and are discarded.

Another terrible abuse is working itself out, scarcely to be found, indeed, as a recognized principle, except in Philadelphia. We mean the separate or solitary system, strictly carried out and continued for years. Our neighbors in New Jersey tried it effectually twenty years ago. Dr. Coleman, the prison physician at Trenton, reported that it "is most effectual to drive the convict mad or to reduce him to imbecility," and the Legislature abolished it. The experience of Rhode Island was similar. Dr. Cleveland, warden of her State prison, describes the system as "a slow, corroding process, carrying its subjects to the demerment or destruction both of body and mind;" and he avers that "of the forty prisoners committed while the strictly solitary system was in operation, ten, or one-fourth of the whole number, manifested decided symptoms of demerment." It was speedily abandoned.

Besides this correction of old abuses, positive progress in the right direction has been made. In nine States, including our own, the commutation system has been introduced; the prisoners, being allowed to earn, by their good conduct, diminution of their term of service—usually about one-sixth; but in our State, in some cases, as high as one-fourth. In some States, also, the convict has a comparatively short day's work, and is credited for extra labor—in the Ohio State prison to the amount of one-fifth of his earnings when he does a full day's work. Again, as it is found by experience that four-fifths of all convicts, when committed, are without trades, it is gradually becoming the practice to teach these. In the Wisconsin State Prison every convict having as much as two years and a half to serve is taught a full trade.

Better still, the schoolmaster is gradually penetrating into our prisons. The first law ever enacted in the United States for prison instruction was passed by the Kentucky Legislature in 1829. It provided for four hours' instruction to convicts on Sundays. In 1852 instruction for prisoners was provided for in our own State; but the salary was so small—only \$150 a year—as to afford but one hour's instruction daily. Canada has given more attention to this matter than we.

Thus much has been done in the right direction. The reign of terror in our prison administration is passing away. Christian principles are superseding the old idea of the laws of vengeance. And the practical result is satisfactory. Under the cruelly coercive system which prevailed in this State twenty-five or thirty years ago, when one prisoner died under the lash, and another committed suicide to escape flogging, the average number of recommitments was thirty per cent. Under the present mild administration of our State prisons, in which corporal punishment is abolished by law, and crucifixing, bucking, and the like are forbidden—the number of recommitments has been reduced to about ten per cent.

This is the bright side; but there is the reverse of the shield. The report we are considering declares, as the result of observations recently extended by them throughout thirteen Northern States, that "they are constrained to avow the opinion that there is not a State Prison in America in which the reformation of the prisoners is the one supreme object of the discipline." But until this is made the one object, we have reached but the threshold of prison reform.

A country which, in days past, has been subjected by its rulers to terrible oppression has recently had established for the government of such of its convicts as were sentenced for five years or more a system of prison discipline unmatched in the world. We must look to Ireland now as the pioneer in this matter. In the year 1854 a certain Sir Walter Crofton, a man of Christian temper, energy, perseverance, and rare administrative ability, was appointed chairman of the directors of prison discipline in Ireland. He found the prisons of that country in a deplorable condition; the prisoners morally and physically prostrate; no hope, no education, no incitements to good conduct. In thirteen years he has effected among Irish convicts an industrial and social revolution which is one of the most noteworthy events of our time. He started with the great principle that a prison should be a place not of reformatory, but of reformation. He sought not to deter, to repress by terror; but to invite, to encourage by hope and reward and of liberation. He appealed to the higher and nobler, instead of the baser and more cowardly elements in human nature; and eminently successful was the enlightened appeal. He carried out, to an extent never before attempted, the principle of classification; and he arranged a system of tests whereby to measure the moral amendment of the prisoners. It is one of the greatest defects of our prison management that this last has been overlooked.

He has three distinct stages, or changes of prison, each demanding its own separate locality, buildings, arrangements. In the first the solitary system is adopted, in modi-

fied form and for a limited time; the idea being that, for a time, at first, the discipline should be strict, even rigid; but that the convict, by good conduct, should earn gradual alleviation. The term of this confinement to separate cells is eight months, but exemplary deportment reduces it to six. The prisoners eat and work alone; but they attend public worship twice a day, and school for one hour each day, and take exercise daily, all in association, though conversation at this stage is not permitted. The first thing taught in school is a lesson on the "Bible Convict System." It is explained to the convict that the future is, in a measure, in his own hands; that in half a year he may pass to another prison, where he will labor in company with his fellows; where he will receive payment for extra work, and a fixed gratuity for steady conduct; where a system of "marks" which are issued to the most deserving will gradually raise him, if his behavior is good, to the "exemplary class," whence, after fourteen months' service, he may be transferred to what is called the "intermediate prison." Here he is at comparative liberty, confined by no walls, trusted to go beyond prison bounds, allowed to work with an laborer or mechanic in civil life. One of these intermediate prisons is a series of workshops for those who have learned trades; the other is a farm, where the half-tamed convicts reclaim and till the ground, shattering rocks, laying underdrains, etc.

What has been the result? That the number of Irish convicts of this class has diminished, in 13 years, from 1837 to 1850—nearly in the proportion of 4 to 10. Another item is equally suggestive. The demand for convicts who by their good conduct have reached and passed through the "intermediate prison" is beyond the supply; many applications on the books remaining unfilled. Employers actually prefer them as servants and laborers to the average of those they find in society.

Is there not, in all this, most valuable material for thought? Ought it not to engage the earnest attention of our legislators, and of those who elect them? Prison discipline is a subject hardly second in importance to that of public education; with which, in truth, it is intimately connected.

The Duty of the Republican Party—Advocate the Whole Line.

When General Sheridan rode from Winchester to the front on the day of his memorable victory, he found his line formed. It had suffered defeat. Timid counsels urged that it should fall back in good order, and in trench. Its great captain advanced the whole line, and won the most brilliant victory of the war.

This is our advice to the Republican party. Advance the whole line. California is regarded as the beginning of a new revolution. The people are said to be weary of the Republican party, forgetting that the Republican party has been thwarted, betrayed, and embarrassed by Mr. Johnson ever since he took the Presidency. It is our pride and duty to reconstruct the Union and end the war.

We should have done this had the President given us the least sympathy—had he not been a traitor and a hypocrite. His reconstruction meant a surrender into the hands of the men who had created the Rebellion. The country protested. He has met its protests by insidious and malignant enmity, by paandering to the worst class of politicians and adventurers, by driving from office honest men who differed from him, and appointing dishonest men who pretended to sustain him. Reconstruction has been weary, tedious, uphill work. We have had every obstacle the Executive could put in the Judiciary doubtful, a sullen, vindictive sentiment in the South encouraged by the President's Copperhead dalliance. As it is now, we may consider the work ended unless the cunning of Mr. Black or some other of the President's advisers may find a new objection, or unless these bad men in their desperation should attempt to seize upon the machinery of government, and hurl Congress from power. To reconstruct the South with the President's aid would have been a difficult and delicate labor. To reconstruct it in the face of his enmity is one of the most hazardous impossibilities ever imposed upon a people.

So with the tariff and the finances. Here are two subjects demanding the gravest attention. We have a revenue system based upon the artificial and extreme necessities of war. A healthy management would have aided us in reducing the debt. But how have the finances been managed? What has Mr. Johnson done towards executing the financial laws of Congress? Take the internal revenue system. We believe that the President has wasted millions upon millions of dollars in the collection of revenue. For political reasons he removed last summer a majority of the best assessors and collectors, and appointed men without character or record. Mr. McCulloch protested, but the Philadelphia Convention was necessary—money and position were needed—adventurers were crammed into places—adventurers who feared rejection by the Senate, and must needs feed ravenously on the Treasury. What do we now see? In whiskey alone \$160,000,000 of taxes are lost to the Treasury every year! The whiskey interest created and permitted by Andrew Johnson's wanton neglect of duty daily takes nearly half a million of dollars from the Treasury. Yet this man talks of executing the laws! Execute the laws! Here is a law of revenue, so badly executed that but one-sixth of the whole amount is collected. It is plain to all men that he has fostered a gigantic system of fraud, systematized, far-reaching, and widespread. We find no punishment, no earnest effort to stop it. Even the World, which has the impertinence to call Mr. Johnson's Cabinet "Republican," says that his "administration must justify itself before the country or be overwhelmed in disgrace." We say disgrace has come. The President either could execute this law or he could not. If he could, he should have asked Congress for more power. Unfortunately, it has never occurred to him that he had anything to do but to write proclamations and denounce the "radicals."

A President whose favorite amusements consist in "swinging around the circle," "putting his feet down," and dancing along "the war path," can scarcely be expected to devote himself to saving \$150,000,000 a year.

And so the money goes, and fraud reigns, and we have the special friends of his Excellency running from one office-holder to another, levying taxes, assessments, and contributions to sustain the party and print the National Intelligencer. It was bad when Buchanan and Black were in power. Now that Johnson and Black have combined, it is infinitely worse. Well may the leading Democratic newspaper of the country dread the President's being "overwhelmed in disgrace." The Republican party must have laws of reconstruction and finances. Some of them have been defied; others have been executed negligently. Yet the party is assailed, and an attempt is made to carry us before the country not only responsible for our own shortcomings,

but—God help us!—for the infamies of the President. This is the "Revolution" that awaits us. This is the retreating tide that is to sweep us out of existence, and give the country over to the uncheked control of the worst men who ever aimed at power. Unless we temporize, and act warily, and cease to be "radical"—unless we abandon our principles—we are to be defeated. We do not believe it. If we did, it would only make duty clearer. The Republican party is the party of progress, and it must advance. The organization must be perfected. Our principles must be asserted with more vehemence. The lines of demarcation must be drawn, and the only password for the present must be—the overthrow of Johnson's administration. It darkens the country like an eclipse. It is full of shame and falsehood and cunning. Here is a President whose history men will hesitate to teach their children, and around whom swarm greedy, unprincipled adventurers. He has done nothing but war; nothing but produce unrest, fever, and anxiety. The atmosphere that surrounds him and his Cabinet is so dense and foggy with corruption, intrigue, insincerity, and madness, that men walk in terror.

This being so, we must prepare for the fall elections. The guns of the Democracy over the California elections are as harmless as the blank cartridges with which they are loaded. If we only do what is wise and intrepid, we need not fear. But we must have a thorough reorganization. Let all minor issues fall. All who are timid or time-serving should be allowed to go the rear. We want no compromise coalitions, no temporary political "movements," no temporary political market shifts. Better be fairly and squarely defeated on the principle of universal freedom and universal suffrage than gain a victory that will leave one man, no matter what color, without every political right. Honorable defeat is a hundredfold more precious than dishonorable victory. We have to meet the cries of "nigger supremacy" and "America for the white men," and other degrading appeals to popular prejudice. Well, we heard these cries in 1856, under Fremont, and in 1860, under Lincoln. Then we had the sword over us, and our enemies menaced us with conquest and massacre. We triumphed, and they made good their threats. The sword of resistance has been broken, and our enemies content themselves with vulgar and passionate clamors. After having tried to carry Johnson through two elections, they insist that he belongs to us, and that we must carry him. Johnson is as much a Republican as Arnold was a patriot after his treason. We never heard of Washington proposing to give up the war because Arnold was in the British army. The Johnson party—Philadelphia Convention and all—is only so much carrion lying in a ditch. The Democratic party is our foe. It summons us to a new struggle, and along its lines we hear the exultant cries of preparation. Let us spend the few remaining weeks in organization. Let us above all things surrender no principle—make no concession. Then our triumph will be righteous as well as sublime.

The Movement for Impartial Suffrage in the Border States.

The Republican State Convention of Maryland, at its meeting in May, issued a call for a Border State Impartial Suffrage Convention, which met yesterday. The call was addressed to Republicans in Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri, and the object of the meeting is to urge Congress to abolish all legal distinctions on account of color, and to give the suffrage of the Sumner-Wilson Bill at the earliest possible moment. In connection with this proposed appeal to Congress will be presented the results of the investigations by Congressional Committees regarding Maryland and Kentucky. Within a few weeks a sub-Committee of the Judiciary Committee meets in Baltimore to inquire into the Constitution and form of government of Maryland. About the same time another sub-Committee meets at Louisville, Kentucky, to inquire into the contested elections from that State. The reports of these Committees, aided by a strong appeal from the Baltimore Convention, are relied upon to strengthen the movement for forcing universal suffrage upon the whole country by act of Congress.

The Condition of the States Participating in the Baltimore Convention is not satisfactory to either political party.

Republicans are as much dissatisfied with Kentucky and Maryland as Democrats are with Tennessee. Though North and South have settled down to peace, and though the name "Slave States" has disappeared from our maps, the border States still retain most of the peculiarities which distinguished them before and during the war. They are still debatable ground over which contending principles wage fiercest war. On the one side are men like Governor Brownlow who seem never to weary in the work of denouncing Rebels. On the other side are Kentucky and Maryland politicians who are no less bitter and venomous in their attacks upon the so-called radicals. The Democratic journals of these two States may be taken as fair exponents of the sentiments of the class they address, and they are urging President Johnson to disperse Congress, if it attempts to impeach or remove him, at the point of the bayonet. Kentucky Democratic journals talk of "an army with banners" and not a little squad of radical Congressmen" being needed in case of a disturbance or serious outbreak in that State. Maryland Democrats promise to raise a million of men, strong-minded men, who will, in case Congress undertakes to overthrow their new State Constitution, "rally to its rescue with a will that will make such rotten traitors and tyrants as Stevens, Butler, Schenck, Sumner & Co. quake and fear." The men who indulge in this style of inflammatory language evidently need to be reconstructed in some way. Their belligerent tone is not in harmony with the moderate and peaceful style common in Northern and Southern journals.

But the warlike tone of Border State politicians and journals is only an indication of the social and political diseases which exist in that section of the country. A few days ago we called attention to some of these as exhibited in the State of Maryland. The black laws of that State are too well known to be explained away or apologized for. The Baltimore Sun, in reply to the statement of facts on this subject given in these columns, is compelled to admit in detail the correctness of the statements which it attacks in mass. It is a plain, undeniable truth that the black laws of Maryland are worse than the black laws of South Carolina. The apprentice and vagrant laws of both Maryland and Kentucky are more oppressive than similar laws in Mississippi and Alabama. In short, the Border States can and do pursue with safety a policy of oppression towards the colored race which would be dangerous in the Gulf States. In the latter the negroes have enjoyed for a considerable time past the right of public meeting and of free speech. But in Maryland these rights

were denied in one instance to the negro within the past two months. These circumstances, and many others of the same kind which might be mentioned, go to prove that life and property and the equal rights of all men before the law are less secure in the Border States than in any portion of the country lately in rebellion. The responsibility resting at present upon the Border States appears to be greater than ever before. For which they shaped the compromise policy longer anti-slavery agitation. But there is no longer any need for compromise on that question. There are no slave States, and there should be no Border States.

It only remains for the latter to recognize their new position, and to close the war between North and South by their action upon the suffrage question. They may, if they choose, decide whether the individual States or the Republic shall hold the ballot-box. But if they would accomplish this task they must cease striving to reconcile freedom and slavery; they must abandon all legislation based on color; they must recognize the equality of all men before the law, and they must make the intelligence and the virtue of the citizen the only test of his right to vote. For, though Congress may well shrink from legislation affirming the title to interfere with the franchise in States which have not forfeited their rights by rebellion, the time is probably not distant when the object aimed at by the Convention of to-day will be attained by an amendment of the Federal Constitution. That seems necessary to perfect the work of the war.

Senators Wade and Wilson on the Stump.

We have given the speech of Senator Wade at Cleveland, Ohio, and that of Senator Wilson, delivered at Worcester, Massachusetts. These speeches are to be accounted for much as Senator Wade accounted for his presence at Cleveland. He was there, not because he had something to say, but because he was in the bill, and was sent by the committee. So we print the speeches, not because they are brilliant, able, eloquent, or original—for they are neither of these—but because they are part of the political programme, and because there may be a certain amount of instruction upon which a party lives, yet in the very fact that it is without ideas. We may present these two pieces of party harangue as satisfactorily showing two things—first, that the Republican party, in using the nigger, has used up its whole capital and has not a single idea to present to the people—or none that is dare present; and, second, upon how small a capital of original thought men may be the great leaders of a great party, and stand so high in party appreciation as to be named, not sneeringly, as Presidential candidates. Mr. Wade made two points. One of these is that the national debt is "a bagatelle," men may ask the Senator what he means by that. It makes that as weighing so heavily upon the people that he thought a new division of property might be necessary to lighten it. Mr. Wade's other point was that he did not know whether he was a white man or not. And these two points apparently constitute the political capital—the new ideas—upon which the Republican party in the West goes into the campaign. It remains to be seen whether an ethnological doubt and a financial falsity are good capital for a political campaign. Mr. Wilson's speech also exhibits his party as bankrupt in principle and purpose. He rambles over its achievements and tries to stir up the dying embers by a rush at Johnson. That will not do. Johnson is too far gone to serve as a good cause for any real enthusiasm in even the youngest political hunters. If Republicans can give the people no better reasons than these leaders give for the life of their party, it must go, and all the States must join Maine and California; for the existence of the white man is certainly one grand political fact, and needs assertion.

Effect of the Amnesty Proclamation.

The assertions of the President's Washington organ concerning the Amnesty Proclamation and its effect on the country read more like hyperbole than sober opinion. It is difficult to believe that the National Intelligencer intended to be serious when it published a statement so gross in its exaggerations and so obviously untrue as that which follows:—"The political effect of the Amnesty Proclamation is already known and felt to be highly favorable to the speedy restoration of the Union by a true and patriotic Republican administration. It will be hailed as an evidence that the day is past for the infliction upon their people of vindictive penalties in the form of confiscation, proscription, disfranchisement, or banishment. Amnesty will also give confidence to the great mass of the people of this country in the rashness and obstinacy which thus jeopardize the prosperity and peace of the country."

The Funny Fenians.

Why should we sigh for a Punch or a Judy, or a professedly comic paper with any name whatever, when in the regular routine of our daily reports we can find such funny reading as the account of the sayings and doings of those humorous lads, the Fenians, in the Congress of the Irish republic, now safely making laws, not on the hills of Tipperary, or even in Toomey's wood, but in Cleveland, Ohio? It may not be a joke at all, this Fenian Congress at Cleveland, with a green-coated sentry at its doors, and discussing a regular annual message from President Roberts; but if not, then we must admit that Pat, who laughs so happily at all that is serious, is the only man on earth who can be preposterously serious over the exquisitely laughable. There was not only a message from the President, but one also from the "Secretary of War," proposing to organize an Irish army on the temperance basis; send army to pay its own expenses and the expenses of the war. "The soldiers of the army of the Irish republic are to be sober and discreet men"—as if the Congress did not know that when all the Fenians get sober the game will be up! This Secretary will be, evidently, a greater blunderer than Stanton was, and the Irish President ought to turn him out at once, unless there is an Irish republican Teutone of Office bill, in which case we cannot see that the republic is within the saving power of saltpetre. All the friends of freedom, however, must rejoice that the recent action of the Troy chambermaids has not crushed the infant republic. It will be remembered that these chambermaids, in answer to the offerings of their native country, declared that they would contribute no more money till they were told what had been done with the money previously given—a ridiculous requirement, that would expose to the world all the great plans of the leaders.

Notwithstanding this secession of the financial magnates of the republic, the war against Great Britain will go on just the same. Money

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hinder restoration by encouraging the Southern oppositionists to renewed efforts against the law, and to a persistent disregard of its requirements in respect to the terms prescribed for readmission to the Union. The probability is that portions of the South will invest it with a vitality it does not possess and a scope which it cannot justify claim, and that, laboring under this misconception, they will forget that the ultimate decision as to the lawfulness and sufficiency of the State organizations, and the eligibility of State officers and of the Senators and Representatives sent to Washington, belongs exclusively to Congress. Hence the mischief which the proclamation is calculated to inflict upon the South, and the delay which it is likely to occasion in the work of reconstruction.

Moreover, "the great majority of the people of the North" condemn the proclamation as an inexcusable act of defiance to Congress, and an audacious attempt to nullify its laws. Of the Republican journals, one and but one, has uttered a syllable which can be tortured into an approval of the document. We refer to the Tribune, which accompanies the words relied upon by the Intelligencer for its claim to Mr. Greeley's support with comments hostile to the pretensions of Mr. Johnson. Excepting only the Tribune, we believe that not a single organ of Republican opinion can be cited as having even inferentially approved his action. The party, in truth, is a unit against it, not because Unionists favor vindictive penalties in any shape—not because they are disposed to treat the South harshly or ungenerously—but because they hold that the sovereign power, by virtue of which amnesty may be proclaimed, being vested in the people, may be exercised by Congress only, not by the President.

His feeling has not been shaken by the labored efforts of the President and his apologists to justify his assumption of power in regard to amnesty, by appeals to the technicalities of lawyers, and the power to pardon conferred by the Constitution. The country relies more upon common sense than upon professional hair-splitting, and the common sense interpretation of the constitutional power to remit penalties imposed on individuals is adverse to the pretended right to decree a general pardon. Aside from special pleadings or quotations from the Federalist, the country remembers that in 1862, as now, Congress affirmed its entire control over the whole subject of amnesty. This assertion by Congress of its exclusive jurisdiction over the subject, is a part of the policy which "the great majority of the people of the North" have unequivocally upheld. To say, then, that amnesty, involving legal usurpation on the part of the President who proclaims it, will "give confidence to the great mass of the people in their business affairs," is simply absurd. There can be no confidence without harmony in the Government; and here is a case in which the Executive arrogates an authority of which Congress claims to be the sole possessor. Instead of harmony, we have an angry and perilous conflict, wantonly provoked by Mr. Johnson, with no chance of permanent advantage for himself or for the South. The consequence is that industry and commerce suffer severely from Mr. Johnson's course; a rapid rise in gold indicates the apprehensions to which it gives rise; and business men of all parties agree in condemning the rashness and obstinacy which thus jeopardize the prosperity and peace of the country.

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